

One viewpoint on the political
character of Philhal

In view of the criticism sent in by our friends, ~~the old Philhal group~~, and perhaps based by Sri Zaidi & ~~some other~~ consider the political character of Philhal.

There is no doubt, whether we see it in terms of the editorial committee ~~etc~~ (Dilip, Shabha & to a lesser extent Panday & Dada) or the distribution network that has so far emerged, that one group having a specific political perspective today controls the initiative in bringing out Philhal. I say this not as a criticism but merely as a description of the state of Philhal. And it is important to ~~do~~ ^{recognise} the control of Philhal ~~etc~~, ^{by} this group because the political character of Philhal is & will be increasingly determined by ~~the group~~ the policies of this group.

(let us call it the new Philhal group)

This group, analyses the existing communist parties & their trade unions as non-revolutionary in the sense that they are ^(a) controlled by 'representatives' of the workers, rather than ^{the workers themselves & b)} that these parties & unions attempt to 'manage' the workers movement, rather than participate with the working class in its confrontation against capital. As a description of existing state of the working class movement ~~etc~~ personally I find this accurate. Whether the present historical situation permits any other alternative is another matter which I will ~~do~~ ^{new Philhal group} not go into here. The point I want to make here is that this ~~a group~~ itself is not fundamentally different,

* And I would like to mention here in passing that while this group must be applauded for the humility with which it perceives its own rôle ~~as~~ ^{as} in the workers movement ; that humility is not exclusive to it. There are others ~~also~~, among the 'representatives' also who have much humility. And certainly ~~it is~~ that humility does not give the new Phikkel group the excuse to adopt a 'holier & ~~more the~~ wiser than thou' attitude towards other sections of the left.

* And I am now referring to not only those directly connected with being out
the paper but also their friends in and outside Delhi.

from the other 'left' groups which it characterises along with the
communist parties as being non-revolutionary. It ~~itself~~ is first of all
largely a group of middle class intellectuals, students & professionals. It is
a ~~group~~, like the other groups, in the form of idealised 'experts', advanced
cadres and less advanced cadres - the last two categories being organised
into study circles. Its method of functioning is secret and underground
like that of any Leninist 'party' in its embryonic phase. This
group also sees its role as that of interpreting for the working
class, its historic role - as ~~understood~~ ^{education} by this group. In that sense
while the ^{working} group is distinct from any other 'left' political groups
in its political perspectives proposed political perspectives it must be
characterised along with the other groups & parties as ~~one~~
~~one~~ group ^{among} ~~among~~ ^{with its own political boundaries} 'representatives' of the working class, rather
than as a group emerging from the working class itself.

~~representatives of the working class~~
Therefore while the group is certainly non-revolutionary
in its attitude towards the working class as a ~~class~~ 'class',
independent of the affiliation ^{of} ~~new~~ ^{new} elements of the class to one or another
left group, the group itself cannot be seen as anything but one
among the several Leninist ~~revolutionaries~~ ^{revolutionaries} groups & parties
of 'representatives' of the working class.* And to the extent that
this group would wish to move Phibnal in the direction of its own
perspectives I think this is a serious departure from the original
intention (~~of~~ ^{of} cyclotyed appeal) of making Phibnal a non-revolutionary organ
for all sections of the left. I would emphasise here that non-revolutionary attitude
towards the left cannot be a merely passive attitude of 'anybody is welcome'

to write but an active attitude of continually working
~~the~~ the other groups to ~~read~~ write in Phibol, criticize &
use it for their purposes as well.

Let me clarify that I personally ~~as~~ ~~think~~ do not ~~think~~ think that making Phibol a workers' paper as opposed to a non-veteran organ of the left is worthy. For reasons Dilip has repeatedly emphasized I think that this is a very worthwhile effort. But the fact remains that this is a departure from the original intentions of Phibol - as expressed in ~~the~~ ^{existing} appeal - on the basis of which we have tried to win support from other organizations of the left & especially, the basis on which we approached the old Phibol group of Bhar for ~~accepting~~ ^{the} taking ~~the~~ ^{the} name of Phibol using the name 'Phibol' & the good will that goes with it. ~~that~~
To carry on in this ~~new~~ ^{new} situation To ~~try~~ try to cover over this departure or ~~the~~ bulldoze it through without explicitly confronting it among ourselves, and without making a clear clarification to the original Phibol ~~group~~ group & other friends among the left, would be dishonest. It would be tantamount to the same kind of resort plotting & ^{notable} backstabbing that is no characteristic of the ^{other} left 'groups' parties today. I think that in recognition to its own departure from the traditional style of functioning of these groups, the new Phibol group should unambiguously announce its new perspective for Phibol, ^{with} perhaps even disavowing it & publish ^{it} criticisms ^{for a few issues} in Phibol and certainly & I seek clarification from the old Phibol group about whether they would still be ^{not} willing to allow ^{use of} the name on this new basis.

This is not written for publication.

This is a note for consideration by the editorial committee of Phihal. You may or may not choose to publish it. If you do publish, please edit & publish anonymously. In any case I wish to clarify that it has been hurriedly written for the 10th meeting as I will not be there. Some points have been overemphasized too strongly.

Some others are tentative. Friends are requested to see the note in the spirit in which it is written i.e. not aggressively with ^{the} purpose of picking holes (Any learned & upright debater can do that with a less learned & even if the latter is right)

but sympathetically with the purpose of seeing whether there may be a point in what I am saying.

Can we except a short announcement of Phihal for publication in Mainstream, EPW, Frontier, Zamindar, Current, Bikhram & other politically oriented left papers, in eng. lang. & english. None of them have ready and they would be willing to publicize it.

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